



MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Violet Varona-Lukens, Executive Officer
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
Los Angeles, California 90012

Director of Health Services

At its meeting held January 13, 2004, the Board took the following action:

48-C

Supervisor Antonovich made the following statement:

“On Wednesday, January 7, 2004, State Licensing received a letter dated January 6, 2004 from Santa Teresita Hospital advising of their intent to close the acute care hospital and supplemental services including the emergency department as of January 9, 2004. The letter cited the newly implemented nurse patient ratio legislation as a primary reason for the hospital closure. In addition, a recent newspaper article alleged that the hospital lacked appropriate physician coverage.

“Santa Teresita Hospital has served the City of Duarte and surrounding communities since 1956. Over the past several years, the hospital administration has decreased the number of acute care beds to approximately 40. In addition to the acute care beds, Santa Teresita Hospital offered basic emergency services through their nine treatment bay emergency department, which treated approximately 12,000 patients per year; 1,700 of those patients were brought in by the 9-1-1 system. The closing of Santa Teresita Hospital and the emergency department places greater pressure on the already overwhelmed healthcare system.

“It is important to note that the mechanism and timing from the announcement of emergency department closure to the actual closure was in violation of State Statute, Health and Safety Code 1255.1. This Statute defines a timeline and organized process for a hospital to close its emergency department. The intent of the Statute is to provide sufficient notice of closure to the community and hospital staff, to allow for planning which would be based on an Impact Analysis and Public Hearing conducted by the Emergency Medical Services Agency.

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“The sudden closure of a hospital, with inappropriate notice, leaves the community at risk, adds a profound unanticipated burden on surrounding medical facilities, emergency medical services provider agencies, and the hospital’s own staff. I am deeply concerned about the manner in which the Santa Teresita Hospital’s administration provided notice and closed the facility and the impact that the closure will have on the community.”

Therefore, on motion of Supervisor Antonovich, seconded by Supervisor Knabe, unanimously carried, the Director of Health Services and State Licensing were requested to conduct a review of the closure of Santa Teresita Hospital’s acute care beds and the emergency department and investigate the allegations of lack of physicians and report their findings to the Board.

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Copies distributed:

Each Supervisor
Chief Administrative Officer
County Counsel

Letter sent to:

Contact, Emergency Medical Services Commission